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ABSTRACT

The Educational Supervision Program is designed to define the role of teacher supervisors and to identify and teach the skills needed for effective supervision. The program is based on social learning theory, which assumes that behavior change depends on the presence of three factors: (1) belief in the ability to change; (2) knowledge of probable results of a behavior; and (3) the value placed on a certain outcome. The Educational Supervision Program consists of five modules designed for training supervisors in specific skills. These skills include resolving conflicts between teachers and students, improving teacher effectiveness, effective listening, and interacting with parents. Through its focus on skill development by behavior modeling, the Educational Supervision Program helps clarify the roles of both supervisors and teachers and helps them to strengthen critical skills and develop better attitudes. The program is organized around five concepts: (1) presentation of key actions--the steps or principles involved in a specific skill; (2) modeling behavior--showing a video tape of a person using the key actions to perform a specific skill; (3) practice--training and allowing the subject to rehearse the behavior which has been modeled; (4) social reinforcement--providing positive feedback, approval or a reward when the behavior approximates the model; and (5) transfer of training--consistently applying what was learned on the job. (JD)

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IMPROVING SUPERVISION IN TEACHING USING BEHAVIOR MODELING TECHNIQUES

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BACKGROUND

Applications of Behavior Modeling

Behavior modeling is being increasingly examined as a potential method for improving supervisory behavior (Wehrenberg & Kuhnle, 1980). Most of its applications to date have been for training in business and industry, but the method has potential for training supervisors in any setting. Ed Green and Paul Cook from the McKay Institute and Keith Rogers from Educational Administration at Brigham Young University have recently developed a set of training materials called Supervision in Education, which is a workshop applying behavior modeling to supervisory training in education.

Theoretical Basis of Behavior Modeling

Behavior modeling is based on Bandura's (1977) social learning theory. Although little has been written on applications of behavior modeling as an organizational change strategy (Porras, et al., 1980) and little empirical evidence has been gathered in support of behavior modeling up to this time (Latham & Saari, 1979), impressive evidence has been found in support of the social learning theory. The social learning theory combines the hereditary view which says that behavior is a result of personal factors, with the environmental view which attributes behavior to the environment, by claiming that behavior, environment, and heredity all affect behavior. (Bandura, 1977; Wehrenberg & Kuhnle, 1980).

How Behavior Modeling Deals with Weaknesses of Other Programs

Traditional approaches to supervisory training usually have some major weaknesses. But behavior modeling effectively deals with these weaknesses:

Weakness 1: Traditional approaches to training are rarely backed by a proven theory of change. (Porras, et al., 1980). Lack of a strong theoretical base reduces chances of reliable scientific research on the training method.

Behavior modeling, however, is based on a proven theory of change, the social learning theory, which makes scientific investigation possible.

Weakness 2: Most programs are improperly evaluated or not evaluated at all (Goldstein & Sorcher, 1974). Without evaluation, how does one know if the training programs affect on-the-job performance?

Behavior modeling requires people to perform, and this performance can be evaluated.

Weakness 3: Training programs, and especially leadership training programs, rarely show long-term behavior change (Latham & Saari, 1979).

Several studies using behavior modeling have tested results six months to a year later and found that employees had retained the principles learned in training. (O'Conner, 1979; Latham & Saari, 1979; Porras, et al., 1980)

Weakness 4: Traditional approaches to supervisory training focus on knowledge and attitude change rather than behavior change, and they neglect basic learning principles. (Goldstein & Sorcher, 1974)

Most supervisory-skill training programs are not as useful as they could be because they only attempt to motivate by teaching theoretical and philosophical issues dealing with communications and behavior which managers need, such as the need for managers to be good communicators, to be able to motivate the people he or she directs, to give recognition, to make constructive criticism, etc. But, rarely do these programs deal with ability by, 1) showing the manager how to motivate, how to communicate, and how to carry out the other aspects of leadership required in the teaching and supervision situation, and then 2) allowing the manager to enact the behavior. After traditional training, a supervisor may have learned the theoretical results of a certain behavior, and be motivated to change, but he does not know if he can perform the behavior or how he should perform it. He lacks ability.

How Behavior Modeling Works

The social learning theory assumes that the organization is changed by changing the individual (Porras, et al., 1980). According to the social learning theory, behavior change

depends on three factors: 1) efficacy expectations (a person's belief in his or her ability to perform a behavior, 2) outcome expectations (a person's knowledge of probable results of a behavior), and 3) valence (the value a person places on a certain outcome). Unless all three factors are present, change will either not occur or will not persist for any length of time. Outcome expectations and valence are often addressed during training, but efficacy expectations are mostly neglected.

By combining practice with theory, behavior modeling increases ability (efficacy expectations) as well as motivation (outcome expectations and valence), and thus, sets the stage for change. For example, a supervisor is allowed to practice learned behavior, not only in a training situation but on the job. The supervisor is given adequate feedback regarding his or her practice sessions both in class and with review sessions. Feedback is directly related to how well the participant carries out each step in a specified behavioral routine as opposed to a more general overall critique of his or her performance.

The behavior modeling technique usually has the following instructional sequence.

1. Presentation of key actions—steps or principles considered to be basic to performing critical supervisory tasks.
2. Showing or modeling to the learners, through videotape, a successful supervisor performing the specific key actions.
3. A practice session for the learners, who are given the opportunity to behaviorally rehearse or practice the behavior they have seen modeled by applying it to a specific supervisory problem they are currently facing in their work assignment.
4. Social reinforcement provided for the learners, with positive feedback and approval as the behavior approximates the behavior of the model.
5. Transfer of training which involves implementing the three preceding processes in a manner such that, when combined with on the job performance feedback,

the likelihood is increased that the learners will apply their new skill on the job in a consistent manner. (Wehrenberg & Kuhnle, 1980)

Benefits of Behavior Modeling

A few benefits which have been empirically demonstrated from behavior modeling are:

1. An improved organizational climate
2. Increased satisfaction for those involved in training
3. Ability to transfer the key points to on-the-job situations
4. Decreased absenteeism and turnover among employees
5. Retention of training. (Latham & Saari, 1979; O'Conner, 1979; Porras, et al., 1980)

The Need for Improved Supervision in Education

Supervision is widely acclaimed as a critical factor in maintaining and improving the quality of education. The need for training of supervisors is also widely rated. For example, the April 1981 issue of the ASCD journal, Educational Leadership, is devoted to "Sharpening Supervision Skills."

The Educational Supervision training program consists of five (at present) modules, carefully designed for training specific supervisory skills. The materials which follow contain the introduction to the Educational Supervision materials.

Introduction

Unit 1 Resolving Teacher/Student Conflicts

Unit 2 Improving Teacher Effectiveness: The Teacher Improvement Plan

Unit 3 Improving Teacher Effectiveness: The Professional Progress Interview

Unit 4 Effective Listening

Unit 5 Interacting with Parents

EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION

Society demands more from its educators than it once did. It insists that they meet individual student's needs, serve the handicapped, and test competency acquisition. It also expects educators to be accountable for what students actually learn. It will be easier to meet these demands if teachers have effective supervision, and one way to achieve such supervision is through training programs.

Present levels of supervision leave much to be desired. Research shows that many teachers think their supervisors are, at best, minimally competent. There are several reasons for this perception. For one thing, supervisors and teachers often do not have a clear understanding of a supervisor's role and responsibility. There are dozens of definitions of educational supervision. Lloyd W. Dull (1981) gives thirteen definitions using such terms as help, promote, encourage, provide service and assistance, develop and coordinate leadership, inform, observe, support, demonstrate, advise, consult, prepare, utilize communication opportunities, and discover and participate in meeting needs. However, there are few clear and concise statements of what a supervisor's responsibility, authority and policy should be.

Since no one seems to know for sure what a supervisor should do, and because there is often no clear distinction between administrative and supervisory behavior, any activity becomes legitimate, especially when there is no follow-up to determine the supervisor's effectiveness.

Supervisors are also perceived as incompetent because teachers and supervisors do not always agree on what skills are necessary for good supervision.

And finally, teachers may have a low opinion of supervisors because they distrust them. As Mosher and Purpel (1972) say:

> Though lip service is routinely paid to the importance of supervision, the most widespread attitude is probably suspicion - suspicion that supervision is at best ineffectual and at worst a harmful form of interference with the work of the teacher. By and large, educators are confused in their understanding of supervision and ambivalent in their feelings about it.

The Educational Supervision Program is designed to define the role of supervisors and to identify and teach the skills needed for effective supervision. This program maintains that a supervisor's role is to provide services which will help develop curriculum, improve instruction, and provide for faculty professional development. It focuses on how he serves, not the actual content of the curriculum, the methods of instruction, or the kinds of inservice training. This program also holds that the most important skills or "key actions" for supervisors to have are interpersonal skills. Through these skills a supervisor can discover teachers' needs and find the resources to meet them.

Educational Supervision recognizes the gulf between "knowing" and being able to educate. It also recognizes the fact that both supervisors and teachers need to improve their interpersonal skills. It assumes that because every educator has a supervisory role of some sort, it is important for all of them to learn about effective supervision. It helps them do so by establishing the need for better supervision, providing instructional materials, explaining key actions, presenting a video-taped model of supervision, and stimulating practice, feedback and review. Through its focus on skill development by behavioral modeling, Educational Supervision helps clarify the roles of both supervisors and teachers and helps both to strengthen critical skills and develop better attitudes.

Educational Supervision is organized around the following five concepts:

1. Presentation of key actions - the steps or principals involved in a specific skill.
2. Modeling behavior - showing a video tape of a person using the key actions to perform a specific skill.
3. Practice - training and allowing the subject to rehearse the behavior which has been modeled.
4. Social reinforcement - which provides positive feedback, approval or a reward when the behavior approximates the model.
5. Transfer of training - consistently applying what was learned in the sessions on the job.

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